

NCIA Request for Information (RFI)



**OPERATIONAL NETWORK – EXTENSION (ON-X)
Calling notice – Pre-competitive Industry Engagement**

NCIA Calling Notice - Request for Information (RFI)

To: **Industry Partners**

1. The NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA) is conducting market research to identify qualified vendors and gather input on potential solutions to support the upcoming acquisition for Operational Network - Extension programme.
2. The anticipated scope of this effort includes the delivery of private cloud infrastructure, data centre facilities, migration and/or delivery of core digital workplace services, and service operation management.
3. All business applications as well as other specific NATO applications will be migrated onto the ON-X cloud infrastructure under a separate effort.
4. To that end, NCIA invites early engagement and industry participation from capable and interested industry partners in a **hybrid engagement** scheduled on **2 and 3 July 2026** at **Leonardo Royal Hotel Promenade, Van Stolkweg 1, 2585 JL, Den Haag** and on-line (connection details will be provided to registered participants).
5. Companies interested in participating are requested to complete the registration form at: <https://cvent.me/ZDOAP0> **no later than 16:00 CET on 24 June 2026**.
6. Due to limited space, **in-person attendance** needs to be coordinated within the company to **not exceed two representatives**. The discussion will be focussed on the specific technical and operational topics related to this project.
7. On the first day of the event, **2 July 2026**, **NCIA will present** its vision and desired outcomes of the ON-X programme providing a scalable, secure-by-design private air-gapped multi-cloud environment for storing and processing classified data at NS level. NCIA will respond to clarifying questions **and invite comments from participants attending both in person and remotely**.
8. On the second day of the event, **3 July 2026**, NCIA intends to conduct **a limited number of in-person bilateral meetings** to obtain further feedback on the high-level objectives and expected benefits of the ON-X Programme, and to better understand relevant industry capabilities. Companies are invited to express their interest in contributing to this part of the engagement by completing the Survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T8SNJSL>), questions available in Annex B. Based on the responses to the questions, NCIA will select relevant companies for bilateral meetings. Schedules for bilateral meetings will be confirmed by 25 June 2026.
9. Only companies from a NATO member country can participate in or respond to this RFI (https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/nato_countries.htm).

10. This market research activity is for planning purposes only and is not a request for bids. It is part of NCIA's effort to ensure it has a clear understanding of the marketplace and the available capabilities.
11. Any feedback provided by Industry before, during and after the event will be treated by NCIA with confidentiality and will contribute to inform the subsequent stages of the ON-X programme.
12. Should you have any questions or need clarification concerning this Invitation - Calling Notice, please contact Anil-Jacob Rao at ON.extension@ncia.nato.int .
13. NCIA reserves the right, at any time, to cancel this informal market survey, partially or in its entirety. NCIA is not liable for any expenses incurred by Industry in conjunction with their responses to this Calling Notice; any such responses shall not be regarded as a commitment of any kind concerning future procurement of items or services described herein.
14. We thank you in advance for your time and input, and we look forward to engaging with you as we shape this effort.

For the Chief of Acquisition:

Giacomo Piliago
Principal Contracting Officer

Enclosure:

- Annex A – Draft Requirements
- Annex B – Requested Information
- Distribution List

Annex A – Draft Requirements

Note: This is a DRAFT and subject to change.

Background - Current state

Under ITM Recovery Increment 1 (ITM RC Inc1) existing Bi-SC AIS (Bi-Strategic Commands Automated Information System) services within the NATO Command Structure (NCS) will transition to the Operational Network (ON) as per authorised scope, introducing an on-premise environment with cloud features for standardised Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Client Provisioning Services (including Campus LAN and Desktop Services) and Enterprise Core Services (including Identity management, Email, Instant Communication). The ON solution is a computing environment tailored to specific organizational and mission needs. While it may offer capabilities similar to private cloud services, it does not replicate the full architecture, service portfolio, or rapid innovation cycles of commercial (public) cloud providers.

The ON performance, user experience, and long-term maintainability may differ significantly from future commercial cloud solutions. The existence of multiple NS network instances without full connectivity or centralized management limits collaboration and creates configuration & interoperability challenges across entities. It hinders data exchange at both the network and application levels, leaving local application instances isolated.

Issue statement

Key issues and effects of the current state, include:

- **Limited rapid elasticity/scalability:** Current services lack sufficient scalability, limiting the ability to adapt to fluctuating demands, like certain advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) requirements.
- **Limited Resiliency:** The infrastructure is prepared for limited infrastructure related disruptions and not setup to support the current business continuity (BC) plans of the NATO Enterprise Entities. Also due to the unsuitability of current Data Centre Facilities (buildings) to host high compute/data intensive workloads (such as for AI/Data Services), resiliency options for those types of workloads are very limited.
- **Limited Collaboration across the Enterprise:** Network resources are dispersed, creating inefficiencies and hindering collaboration and information sharing across the NATO Enterprise. For example, while Athena (NATO HQ) and Bi-SC AIS/ON are connected, the collaboration is limited (e.g. email exchange).
- **Limited flexibility to stay aligned with cloud innovations:** The infrastructure can't easily leverage mainstream cloud innovations (happening in industry or in the public cloud), potentially resulting in outdated capabilities.
- **Limited Financial Operations Management:** While cost structures in the current model are defined through a Service Catalogue and Service Level Agreement (SLA) funding, transparency at the consumption and efficiency level remains limited. The model does not provide real-time insight into resource usage or cost drivers per service, making it harder to optimize spending or compare cost efficiency across domains.

ON-X Ambition

The ON-X programme aims to develop a scalable, secure, multi-cloud Enterprise solution designed to support up to NATO Secret (NS)-level data by modernizing legacy systems and unifying existing networks into a solution that ensures seamless service operation and system integration. It will enable Enterprise-wide collaboration up to NS with the NATO Enterprise entities and provide Alliance level interoperability by complying with Alliance standards. ON-X is an essential part of the NATO Digital Backbone (NDBB) and lays the foundation for AI and Data Centric services.

Expected ON-X Benefits

The expected outcome of the ON-X programme is to establish an Enterprise multi-cloud capability for seamless information exchange up to NS. A key milestone is the creation of a General-Purpose Cloud (GPC), initiated through a pilot phase and designed to scale progressively to cover the NATO Enterprise.

The private cloud will be built as a sufficiently scalable, service-based architecture, enabling flexible growth and broad adoption across the Enterprise, providing the following benefits:

1. Enhanced scalability, agility and continuous modernization by establishing an enterprise-wide and scalable cloud environment
2. Increased enterprise-wide collaboration by unifying existing networks into a multi-cloud environment
3. Enhanced resiliency and survivability by building an Infrastructure capable of maintaining operational continuity under degraded conditions
4. Increased operational efficiency by establishing automated and scalable 'As a Service' Cloud solutions
5. Capability to integrate AI and Data Centric Security (DCS) features, by setting up the foundation for the natural integration of emerging technologies
6. Capability to future-proof and meet evolving demands
7. Increased cyber-security resiliency posture.

Objective of the early engagement

Input received will assist in refining requirements, identifying capabilities, and shaping the strategy for any future solicitation.

During this early engagement process, the NCI Agency seeks industry engagement with the following objectives:

- To gain validation and feedback on the business case and benefits;
- To gain feedback on the envisioned approach, including but not limited to:
 - Timeline, phasing & overall approach
 - Contracting approach
 - Estimated contract value
 - Envisioned operating model
 - Key Constraints
- To gain understanding of the solution space, including but not limited to:
 - Operating models
 - Architecture
 - Enabling technology
 - Implementation

- To gain lessons from similar transformational projects, including but not limited to:
 - Key success factors
 - Business change approaches
 - Pitfalls and risks

- Identify information requirements to achieve successful competition and effective industry partnership

Annex B – Requested Information

Purpose

Submission will be reviewed and assessed in order to select companies to be invited to the bilateral meetings on **3 July 2026**.

Submission Instructions

Interested parties are invited to respond in accordance with the instructions below:

- a. Responses should be submitted by completing the online Survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T8SNJSL> no later than 23:00 hours Central European Time (CET) on 21 June 2026.
- b. Responses submitted by email will not be accepted.

Requested information

Company information	<i>Primary Point of Contact (email)</i> <i>Legal Business Name</i> <i>Address</i>
Past project description	<i>Please provide a brief description of a similarly scoped project you have been a part of, including its purpose, scope, customer type, and key deliverables.</i>
Role in the project	<i>Please describe your company's role in the referenced project, including whether you acted as prime contractor, subcontractor, consortium member, technology provider, systems integrator, or in another capacity</i>
Data Classification	<i>What was the maximum classification of the data processed in the project?</i>
Overall project scope	<i>Provide range of the overall volume of the referenced project</i>
Candidate scope	<i>What % of the scope did your company execute</i>
Staff	<i>How many staff member (in FTE) of your company were involved in the project</i>

Distribution List

1. NATO Delegation (Attn: Infrastructure Adviser)

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Albania | 12. Greece | 23. Poland |
| 2. Belgium | 13. Hungary | 24. Portugal |
| 3. Bulgaria | 14. Iceland | 25. Romania |
| 4. Canada | 15. Italy | 26. Slovakia |
| 5. Croatia | 16. Latvia | 27. Slovenia |
| 6. Czechia | 17. Lithuania | 28. Spain |
| 7. Denmark | 18. Luxembourg | 29. Sweden |
| 8. Estonia | 19. Montenegro | 30. Türkiye |
| 9. Finland | 20. Netherlands | 31. United Kingdom |
| 10. France | 21. North Macedonia | 32. United States |
| 11. Germany | 22. Norway | |

2. All NATEXs